

POLITICS CHANGED BY CHANGING
IMPULSES 331

spurred by party rivalry. We refer, somewhat slightly to the efforts of these bodies as merely concerned with local government. But there are few Acts of Parliament which affect our lives more nearly than do their multitudinous activities. Their proceedings, it will be said, need no party furbishing to attract attention because they lie so near to the people's interests. This is true. Our interest in public affairs depends upon the closeness of our concern with them. This is assuredly a good argument for the multiplication of parliaments. Issues which affect forty-five millions of people are stretched too widely to be pointed.

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In this drama of political development the action has been sustained by a changing company of impulses, each of which strengthened by indulgence, has become, in its turn, a habit of mind or leading idea. Reverence, paid to a king, a priest-hood, or an aristocracy, is the primordial feeling which consolidates a State. It is a conservative, not a vivifying, force and tends to stereotype not only the politics but the usages and ideas of those who are affected by it. The individualistic impulse of self-interest may compete with it, and, when reverential feelings are not naturally very strong, may gradually undermine the allegiance of the more intelligent and well-to-do classes, prompting them to struggle for the establishment

of representative institutions which
may secure
them from the caprices of despotic
authority.

By appeals to self-respect, or to vanity,
the masses
are led to assert their individuality : so
democracy
is ushered on to the stage, and may
hope
to remain there in cases where the
impulse
of deference¹ to the majority is naturally
so strong as

¹ This impulse may be cultivated by the young—at
all events by
those of Anglo-Saxon parentage. Upon this fact
are based
novel departures in Reformatory organization.